

# Nightmares Escaping

by O'Ryaner Flaudi

Category: Inheritance Cycle  
Genre: Adventure, Romance  
Language: English  
Characters: Arya, Eragon S.  
Pairings: Eragon S./Arya  
Status: In-Progress  
Published: 2016-04-08 16:12:32  
Updated: 2016-04-25 23:00:51  
Packaged: 2016-04-27 20:47:15  
Rating: T  
Chapters: 4  
Words: 13,068  
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Eragon, a young boy from Carvahall, is hunting in the north when something goes awry. His life is saved, but perhaps not as he wished it to be. Now he must struggle against the twenty-something spirits that reside in his body while a seemingly omniscient entity is trying to guide him; the only free rider in Alagaësia. [my take on the IC as I would have liked to see it].

## 1. Chapter 1

Hello guys.

Lets get the required stuff out of the way first. IC and all characters (except OC's) are property of Christopher Paolini and as such all rights go to him.

Now then. This is my personal take on the IC. It is going to be a rewrite from beginning to end (providing I find the time and courage to see this all the way through ). We are going to see LOTS more ExA than Paolini gave us. I might even write some M rated parts and either up the rating of this story or publish them elsewhere. So, without further ado, enjoy the trailer and first chapter.

\* \* \*

><p>The first snow of the year slowly descended upon the spine of the northernmost mountains of these lands. Eragon watched as one by one, the pristine gifts from the heavens covered the forest in a blanket of white. One fell on his cheek, where it quickly turned to a tear-like drop of water. When it rolled down his cheek, he made no move to stop it. His arms felt heavy, like on those midsummer days when he worked the fields of his late uncle tirelessly. Unconsciously he drifted into those happy memories, finding a small measure of comfort in them.<p>

He wondered where his cousin was. He had only been sixteen when his father passed. Roran had stayed on the farm with Eragon, who was his junior by two years for as long as was needed, yet when it became evident Eragon was more than capable of taking care of himself, he had justâ€¦ packed and left one day.

That was how he lived now. He plants the seeds in the spring, worked the fields by summer, hunted for game in autumn and hoped to survive winter. His face fell to the side, where he could see the perfect crystalline gems of water slowly stain red with blood. His blood. Beyond the snowflakes the ground was seared black and the charred remains of plants smoldered, releasing an ashen smell. And there, in the middle of that newly-formed crater was a rock like no other.

Eragon did not know \_how\_, but there, just out of reach, was an egg-like gemstone, sapphire in color and covered with darker veins. The air about it still shimmered with heat. He just wished that whatever higher power it was that sent it, had aimed a little bit better.

Lest he wouldn't be speared through with a branch right now.

Once, a long time ago, when he was handling a cow for the butcher in town, it had kicked him in the stomach. He had been bruised for months. This was worse. The sheer force that had passed through him had likely broken a few ribs. He also couldn't feel his legs anymore. He turned to face the setting sun above him once more.

Slowly, his vision started to haze over with the purest white. He wanted to move forward, embrace it, end the pain that wrecked through his body. Yet some annoying silvery orb was trying to block his way. He reached out to it, tried to move it, but then it was joined by another, a little smaller and orange in color. Then another, and another.

Soon a rainbow of colors was swirling around him. From them, a voice spoke to him. \_"Child, why are you so eager to die?"\_ \_It asked. \_"After all, it is not yet your time."\_

Eragon knew he would be deceiving himself if he chose to believe them. AlagaËsia had a plan for everyone, he just knew it. It simply appeared his plan wasn't soâ€¦ grand. The realization hurt, but not everyone was born to be a hero, a villain or power of a different kind. After all, those people could not exist as beacons throughout the shadows of history without the ordinary people. People like him. Sure, he was young. He had only see the leaves fall seventeen times.

"\_Why do you, a mere human, presume to know the workings of the universe. No, it has been decided that you must remain here a little while longer."\_ And then all the orbs rushed forward, flowing into him. He could feel them, feel their radiance, their energy, their memories. They coursed through his blood, filled him to the brim and almost tore him apart.

Then he was on the ground again, sucking in air like he had spent an hour under water. With effort he tore the branch from his midriff, cursing and yelling loudly as he did. Underneath his fingers flesh and bone knitted back together, forming whole, undamaged skin once

more. Violently he coughed up blood, struggling onto his hands and knees to avoid getting covered in it. What was happening to him?

Eventually he managed to right himself, noting that by now the moon dominated the night sky. He knew that his bow had flown off somewhere into the brushes on his left when the stone had appeared in a blast of fire. He should have had trouble to find it underneath the dense shrubbery by night, yet he could see everything. Every little critter, every single twig and leaf. His bow was right there, scratched, but whole. He took it and slung it over his shoulder. There would be no game for him this winter. Then his eyes landed on the stone â€" perhaps he could sell it.

Carefully he lifted it into his pack. It was strange, for he should be feeling tired at this time of night. Yet for some reason his mind did not feel dulled, he didn't feel any aching muscle either. No doubt fatigue would catch up with him some time, but for now he just opted to keep walking. If the snow came early this year, he would have to hurry back to his village fast.

By the first night he was getting worried. He hungered not, tired not. By the second afternoon he found a small puddle of water, a crystal clear mirror embedded in the white landscape around him. When he took in his reflection, something somehow seemed wrong to him. He just couldn't quite place his finger on it quite yet.

Then he saw his eyes. They had been a dark blue at his birth, turned hazel by his third year and stayed thus. Now, his left iris was a hue of icy blue azure and the right one had turned a dark shade of violet. As if that didn't stand out enough, they were both lined with vibrant dashes of silver. Also he didn't know if it had to do with the cold, but his skin looked a shade or two paler than he remembered as well. Eragon didn't quite know how to feel about it. Something had altered him without his prior knowledge, that much was clear. Yet he found himself admiring this around him he had simply never noticed before. Things he could not \_see\_ before.

He walked for another day and another night before he finally came to the outskirts of Carvahall, his birthplace and the village he called home. It was just past noon, but with winter approaching the rays of the sun just barely grazed over the high mountain peaks that shielded this place from the outside world. When he reached the edge of the forest near his home, he rested for a moment. The villagers knew him, and they would instantly know something about him was off. Would they accept the new him? Of course they would. Surely they would not turn their back on him after all the years he had lived amongst them.

Just as he was about to step out of the trees, he saw something that gave him pause. Two figures, robed in black, were questioning Sloan, the village butcher. Their voices sounded off, warped and muffled. Between every word there was a strange clicking sound, as if they closed their jaws with unnatural strength. With them was another man, regal with long, crimson hair and skin of a sickly color white. He made to move forwards anyways â€" he had done nothing wrong after all â€" and go home. He could still search out a merchant tomorrow.

When his body moved forward, the wind about him died and an unnatural silence settled on the world around him. He saw Farold, one of the

villagers, frozen in mid stride. "Hello Eragon." He whirled around to face the deep male voice that spoke to him. The same voice that had spoken to him on that field where he had lain dying.

"Show yourself." He demanded when the forest behind him seemed empty. From behind one of the trees a hooded figure emerged. Although his eyes were shrouded in darkness, Eragon could clearly see the slight smirk playing about on his lips.

Eragon's eyes drifted across the figure opposite him. At first glance there appeared nothing extraordinary about the hooded man. Upon closer inspection however, what he had first assumed to be the shadows of the forest actually seemed to move with every breath the man took.

"What are you?" Eragon asked.

The shadowy figure chuckled. "All in due time, Eragon. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Icarus, a gate keeper of sorts. I have been tasked with keeping you mostly alive."

"Mostly?" Eragon asked curiously. "Tasked by who?"

"Suffice to say that you live by my grace, Eragon." With that the figure raised his head, revealing his eyes. One was pierced with a pure azure and the other with violet. "And it is not important for you to know who it is I answer to. In any case, I am here to save you from a world of hurt. See those three?" Icarus gestured to the crimson haired man and his two companions in black. Eragon nodded.

"They have come to kill you." Eragon blinked and drew breath for his next question. Yet when he opened his eyes again, Icarus was gone. The world around him came back to life, Farold continued walking like nothing had happened and he heard Sloan say something to the three men.

"If he isn't at that ruin of a farm of his he is probably frolicking around in the mountains with his toy bow. With a bit of luck he will even get himself killed if you ask me." He silently cursed Sloan to the deepest pits of hell.

"Thank you for your cooperative attitude. It is heartening to know that even so far north our King is looked upon with reverence." The crimson haired man said. Eragon immediately shuffled back into the trees. Instead of taking the road home he stuck to the cover of the trees. When he got to the clearing that held his farmhouse he didn't immediately press forward. Had those three shady figures been here? If they had been they had done a good job at concealing their tracks. He waited for another hour before he was convinced it was safe.

Hurrying across the open field he entered his home. The roof was leaky and the cupboards empty, but at least it was his. He finally felt the previous few days catch up to him and with a last ditch effort he pulled off his clothes before dropping into bed. From his bag he retrieved the stone, holding it up above him as he lay on the mattress. This time when he closed his eyes, dreams did find him.

And it was a dream unlike any other. Around him was a fine mist, it brushed around his fingers and parted as his body cleft through it. It was cold, but not uncomfortably so. Then it occurred to him that his feet were not touching solid ground. The clouds around him broke revealing the most breathtaking sight any human would ever behold.

A sprawling, lush city of white unfolded itself underneath him. Somewhere in the back of his mind a name came to him. Ilirea. A being of perfect white flew next to him. Upon closer inspection it was a dragon! And a huge one at that. It craned its giant neck to look directly at him. Its jaws opened, revealing sharp teeth and a barbed tongue. Then it spoke to him

"Eragon, wake up."

It reached for him with his huge, clawed paw.

"Wakey wakey." And it tapped him on the forehead.

Eragon frowned. Whatever was tapping against his forehead this early in the morning would face the wrath of a thousand gods. He would tear it to shreds and-

"squeak."

And apparently it squeaked kind of cutely. Wait, squeaked? With a start he opened his eyes. Whatever it was it was small and scaly and licking his face. Sitting up to put some distance between his face and his assailant he watched as a most peculiar creature made its way into his lap.

It looked remotely like a lizard, but had proportionally large wings made from a leathery type of tissue. In the moonlight its scales lit up a magical blue hue. A dragon! Looking to his left he saw polished fragments of the stone he had found. A thought occurred to him.

Had the stone been an egg?

Tentatively he reached out to the lizard creature, who had settled on his lap much like a cat, curiously staring up at him. Ever smaller drew the distance between him and it. Then the palm of his hand touched the leathery snout of the dragon.

Big mistake.

A searing pain cut through him, not much unlike when the orbs had possessed his body three days prior. Eragon did not know how long he remained there, curled up on his bed while the dragon silently kept watch. After an eternity in his private universe of pain he regained control of his body. The dragon appeared to sense this too, for it hopped down from the bedpost and nudged him expectantly. When he didn't do anything it demonstratively started gnawing on one of his fingers. Eragon's eyes drifted to the silver mark, smack in the center of his hand with which he had touched the dragon. Hopefully it didn't clash with the eyes, he mused.

"Of course you are hungry." Eragon mumbled to himself, getting up from the bed. "Let me see if I have anything. You stay here." He commanded the dragon in a stern voice. It appeared to have understood

him, for it got comfortable on his bed.

A brief search of the house turned up a few remaining strips of jerky and some salted pork. Opting for the more easily chewable pork he returned to his bedroom. Piece by piece he fed the meat to it, watching as its belly noticeably bulged out.

"Congratulations."

Eragon's head whipped up, only to find Icarus lounging lazily against the door. "You know, you could stop popping in at the most inopportune moments." Eragon scolded

"Fortunately every time I appear time stops, so actually when I am here there is no moment."

"Wait, what?"

"Never mind." Icarus said, waving the confused Eragon off. "Fact of the matter is that when your dragon hatched for you it caused a shift in the world."

"Caused one how?"

Icarus stared at him with a look as if he were contemplating if Eragon was truly the most ignorant creature on the face of Alagaësia. "Dragons are the embodiment of magic in its purest form. Magic flows to and from the land. The birth of a dragon â€" especially with so few remaining in the world â€" creates noticeable waves of power."

"And those hunters from before, they have felt it?" Eragon asked cautiously. Icarus nodded in response.

"It is not a precise art, but a dragon is hard to hide. My best guess is you have about five, maybe six days before they find this place and burn it to the ground when they discover you gone."

"Well, what am I supposed to do with a dragon? I doubt it will learn endurance flight in the next five days." Icarus gave him a long, penetrating stare, as if he tried to peel back the layers of Eragon's soul and see what was within.

"The solution will present itself in due time. If I were to simply give it to you, I meddle with a future that does not yet exist. Fret not, Eragon. I shall answer a few of your questions. I suppose that with what lies in store for you â€" the only rider other than the evil king â€" I can do at least that much for you." Icarus strode forward, pulling with him the shadows around him, as if they were attached to him. He sat down on the bed next to Eragon and picked up the dragon, placing it in Eragon's lap once more. "You get three questions."

Eragon nodded slowly and thought hard for a few moments. "How do I know I can trust you?" He asked.

"Well, I saved your life and I have warned you against impending doom twice. What is more, I could literally yank your soul from your chest right now. The fact that I have not done so means that either I am

plotting some really elaborate, painful scheme involving you, or I simply have your best interests and in turn my best interests in mind. Look into my eyes, Eragon. Tell me what you see."

Eragon did not need to look for very long. "They are the same color as mine were changed to."

"Indeed. That is because I imbued you with my power. It was the only way to save your life and in doing so I substantially weakened myself. Regardless of what consequences this will have for you in the future, it means that a part of me is now in you. In harming you, I would harm myself."

"If it is indeed true that, as you claim, you can halt the passage of time, why do you only appear to me?"

"As I said before, a part of me exists within you now, keeping your spirit inside your body. It is through that bond I can speak to you. Only to you." Icarus replied. They sat in silence as Eragon thought of a way to best formulate his last question.

"Do youâ€¦ exist?" He finally asked.

"Obviously, otherwise you would have been dead. I know that is not what you meant to ask. Yes, I have walked this earth for eons, but that was a long time ago. Long before the elves sailed across the ocean and the dwarves made their home in the south. Since then my corporeal form has ceased. What remains of my bones now rests in the ground, far to the south. As you have probably guessed by now, though I may look human in appearance. That, however, is an illusion that only runs skin deep, for no human could exist as I currently do. Rest now, Eragon. Tomorrow will be a busy day for you."

Icarus was gone. Eragon only managed to sleep for a few more hours before the first rays of sun slipped over the horizon. He awoke to find the dragon â€" his dragon â€" curled around his head, quietly slumbering away. It squawked in surprise as he sat up and swung his legs over the side of his bed. After he finished washing himself he stared down at his hands. Having the unusual eyes was bad enough, but he couldn't very well walk around with a glowing hand. From the corner of his eye he saw his worn working gloves. It wasn't an ideal solution but it would have to make do.

After ensuring his dragon had enough to eat, he closed all the curtains and set out towards the village. It took the better part of an hour, but eventually Eragon found himself standing outside of the old story teller's house. Brom was a grumpy old man, generally inconsiderate of others. After Eragon had helped him stock wood for the winter several years back, however, Brom had started to take a shining to him. If anybody knew what to do, it would be him.

He knocked.

\* \* \*

><p>If you enjoyed, please do not hesitate to review. It makes chapter two come all the faster. May peace live within your hearts.<p>

## 2. Chapter 2

Well, first of I would just like to say wow and thank you. This is the first time a first chapter has warranted 6 (!) reviews. I am honestly flattered. I always take the time to respond to my reviewers, so you can find little tidbits for you at the bottom of this chapter. Enjoy!

\* \* \*

><p>"Who is it?" A deep voice boomed from the other side of the solid oak.<p>

"Eragon." He replied, unconsciously pulling his cloak closer around him. He heard some shuffling and rummaging inside the house before the door finally opened. This would be the first time someone else would see his newly gained eyes. Brom had always been friendly towards him, al be it from a distance. Eragon knew he craved his approval. Brom would be surprised, that much was sure, but azure-violet eyes were unusual to say the least, unnatural to most. Carvahall was not a place for unusual business. Every day the sun rose in the east and set in the west and during that time, there was only the usual and the normal. As if having Icarus wasn't bad enough for him, he knew that when the dragon hatched, there would no longer be a place for him here.

Brom silently stared at Eragon for what must have been a full minute. Then he quickly scanned the shrubbery around his house. "Come in." He finally said, pulling Eragon with him by the shoulder. Behind him he slid the bolt lock back into place. With a large circle he walked around Eragon, inspecting him from all angles before sitting down in his chair by the fireplace. "Please, have a seat." He gestured to the chair opposite him. After Eragon sat down, Brom asked: "so what is it I can do for you."

Eragon was a little dumbfounded. He had expected an inquisition, maybe outrage, but not the calm and collected question that had been given to him. "Lately I have been hearing some rumors from the townsfolk and I was wondering if uhmâ€¦" Eragon thought for a moment. "You could tell me again about the dragons."

Brom nodded sagely. "What would you like to know?"

"Well, they said dragons just came out of nowhere, but I was thinking, they have to be born. Nothing, not even dragons could just pop into existence."

Brom frowned. "I don't know which fool in this village believes dragons to just appear. Back when they were still plentiful, they would nest with each other and lay eggs."

"Like chicken eggs?"

"Oh heavens no. Dragon eggs were rumored to be beautiful beyond compare, like the rarest gemstones." There was a shine of recognition in Brom's eyes Eragon couldn't quite place.

"And they would just hatch? But then how did the riders come to be?" Eragon asked. Everyone knew the fabled story of the riders; the humans and elves who kept the peace and order atop their faithful



draconic companions.

"Some would hatch by themselves, yes. Those were the wild dragons. According to legend they were fierce and majestic beyond compare. Other eggs would be enchanted by the riders, magically bound to hatch for a person of their choosing and bond with them." Eragon pondered this new information.

"But there must have been a first, right? Someone must have enchanted the first egg."

"You should ask an elf about it - if you ever have the fortune to cross paths with one that is. It was them who originally warred with the dragons, until one day an elf named Eragon, your namesake, found a young dragon whose mother had been slain. In secret he raised him, in turn becoming the first dragon rider. He, together with the dragons and the elves forged the magic that bound the two races together."

"Wow, I was named after the first rider?" Eragon asked, righting himself in his chair.

"It is a name that carries a lot of power. Do not tarnish it." Brom said to him in a stern voice. They sat together in silence for a while. "Eragon, either you can continue to pretend, or you can tell me what is going on."

"I don't know what you-"

"Don't play dumb. It would take a blind man not to notice the eyes."

Eragon was deliberating with himself. Should he confide in Brom? He doubted the old man had any ill intent, but then againâ€¦

Eventually he settled on an answer. "It is a long story." In response Brom merely quirked a grey eyebrow at him.

It was soft at first, but then they grew louder. Whispers in his ear. Then he heard Icarus. \_"Trust him."\_

Eragon sighed. He was already in deep trouble, telling Brom couldn't make it much worse. "Alright, I shall tell you, but I tell you now that you may not believe me."

"I have seen stranger things in my life than many a human."

Eragon gathered his wits about him before starting his story. "I was out hunting, like every year. I was tracking a young fawn and her mother. I was close upon them, about to make my kill. Then, somethingâ€¦ happened." Brom silently nodded, urging him on.

"I don't remember much, but suddenly there was fire and flying rocks and chaos. I got caught- one of the branches speared me, right through the gut."

"You should be dead." Brom whispered.

Eragon nodded. "I died on that field, Brom. I felt the life ebb from me. But something came, it forced me back into my body." He

interpreted Brom's silence as silent disapproval. "I don't know what I have become, Brom. I rarely sleep anymore, I don't feel hunger, the dreams that I do have are filled with dragons and names of ancient places."

"What names."

Eragon was silent for a moment, trying to recall his dream. \_"Ilirea."\_ He whispered.

"That's impossible. You cannot have heard that name." Brom whispered to himself. "But I don't understand. Why come here, why come to me." Eragon uncomfortably shifted in his chair.

"When I returned, there were three men here. You must have seen them, Brom. Two in dark, long robes and one with hair of crimson."

"Yes, I have seen them, what of it?"

"They have come here to hunt me. Kill me. I know they will be coming for me" and do not ask me how for that is something I am not willing to share. Brom, I don't know what to do, where to go. You are wise, you know things. If anyone in Carvahall can help me, you can."

The crackling into the fireplace died down, until the flames remained eerily still. "You have done well. This was the most favorable next step to take." Eragon wasn't even going to be surprised anymore. Behind him, in the shadows as usual, stood Icarus, proud and tall. "Yet I find it curious. Why did you choose not to reveal my existence?"

"Brom would think me crazy. You keep talking like you know more. Tell me, have you seen the future?"

Icarus smiled. "True enough." He was silent for a moment. "The future is a fickle thing, Eragon. Many things have yet to shape it." Icarus said, neither confirming or denying Eragon's question.

"Why are you here, Icarus?" He said in a stark echo of Brom's earlier question.

"You can't leave behind your dragon. Perhaps you might wish to share that particular fact too" before it creates any unforeseen complications. Just take off your glove, the storyteller will understand." Icarus saw the restlessness in Eragon. "Hold fast, Eragon. I promise answers are coming soon." Then Icarus was gone.

He watched as the story teller appeared to be waging an eternal war of epic proportions. "Brom." Eragon said softly, catching his attention. Without much ceremony he pulled off his glove, revealing the silver mark. Something seemed to come to life in Brom. Then immediately his apparent elation seemed to transform into worry. Eragon watched as a wide range of emotions passed over the aged face, finally settling on determination.

"Tell me," Brom said, "exactly how that dragon egg came into your possession."

He was tempted to ask how it was Brom knew what that mark meant, but

something told him his question would not be answered truthfully. Not now, at least. "It appeared out of nowhere in the middle of that fire."

"Eragon, I need you to run home as fast as you can and gather your bow and arrow. Meet me in the woods west of here; there is a clearing one hour's walk away. Do not worry about food, but bring any other travel provisions you might need. And your dragon of course" Eragon got up to leave. "And Eragon," he caught the old man's eye, "be careful".

The road home seemed longer than usual. Eragon wondered how long it would be before he returned. With those three strange men after him, he doubted Carvahall would know peace with him around. He could not do something like that to his friends. They were simple people, peaceful people. Those who lived in Carvahall had never wanted anything to do with the rest of the Empire. His predicament would not change that.

Closing the door of his home behind him, he quickly grabbed his bow from its shelf and strung it. He clasped his hunting cloak around him, trusting it would keep him warm for the journey to come. After swinging his bow over his shoulder, he slung his quiver over his shoulder as well. Before he could look for his dragon, it waddled into the room and used its claws to climb up his cloak. With some fluttering and squeaking it eventually settled on his shoulder. Careful not to knock it down again he strapped his travel pack containing his tent and bedroll to his back. Once Eragon was sure he had everything he needed he made way for the door. Glancing over his shoulder one last time, he left.

Brom was waiting where he promised he would be. When Eragon stepped through the shrubbery his eyes shot up, looking straight at him. His eyes, however, soon drifted to the creature on his shoulder. There was something in the storyteller's eyes. Something Eragon couldn't quite put his finger on. If he didn't know better, he would say it was recognition. "May I?" He asked, gesturing at the dragon.

Eragon felt the need to protect his dragon, but eventually his mind got the better of his heart. He nodded, carefully lifting the dragon from his shoulder and cradling it in his arms. Carefully Brom reached out to the blue creature in Eragon's arms. "She is beautiful." Brom said as he scratched a particular spot under the dragon's head that seemed to make it hum in satisfaction.

"Where will we be headed?" Eragon asked, placing the dragon back on his shoulder.

"South. Someone of importance is in great trouble."

"How can you be so sure?"

"I have lived a long life and met many people, Eragon. That egg wasn't put there through some divine miracle. For the longest time there were rumors that an egg had been taken by Galbatorix and if that is true, somebody must have been made responsible for it. Someone who saw no other choice than to send it miles away from his or her location."

"They were ambushed?" Guessed Eragon.

"Perhaps. In any case, we can be certain that whatever happened, it was not planned. I know somebody who could maybe tell us more. Last I heard he set up shop in Teirm and that's where we are headed. Have you said all the goodbyes you had to?"

"No, but I doubt saying them will do much good." Brom nodded, satisfied with his decision. "Then let us depart." They walked until the sun had made its way to the horizon, coloring the sky in hues of red and yellow.

"It is time to make camp. Do you think you can find us anything to eat?" Brom asked.

"I thought you said not to worry about provisions." Eragon replied.

"I know, now answer the question."

"I suppose I can try." Eragon said, taking the bow from his shoulder.

"Good, we need to stretch the provisions we have as long as we can." Brom replied. "I will set up a campfire." Eragon hesitated for a moment. Should he leave his dragon behind? It would not do much good on a hunt. Not yet at least. As if it read his thoughts it fluttered down from his shoulder and settled on the ground next to his pack.

Eragon was not going to argue with a matter resolved and instead nocked an arrow. As Eragon walked through the woods, it suddenly occurred to him that he was not alone. From the corner of his eye he saw shadows, at least twenty of them, trailing behind him but keeping their distance. Suddenly a woman was in front of him, tall and with rigid posture. Copper hair swayed in a nonexistent breeze and danced in front of her maroon eyes. Her perfect lips were ever so slightly parted revealing perfect white teeth. In her hands was a delicate bow of ornate design and three arrows. He quickly came to a standstill, wondering what she would want of him.

"It is time to embrace your gift, Eragon." His eyes darted to the right of the woman, where Icarus had appeared. "I believe it is time I share something about the nature of our bond." He stepped forward, dragging the shadows with him like a cloak. "I did not save you alone, Eragon. To bind your soul and body again, I had to use spirits. Much like when a shade is created. Do you remember the crimson haired man?" Eragon nodded.

Icarus was quiet for a moment, as if mourning a lost friend. "His name was Carsaib once, born of a nomadic tribe from the east. By chance he crossed paths with a sorcerer, who schooled him in the art of manipulating spirits. Spirits are wonderful creatures, Eragon, yet they don't fare well in captivity. Manipulating a spirit is one of the vilest deeds man can commit. His teacher was ambushed and murdered and when Carsaib summoned vengeful spirits as a manner of retribution, they turned on him. They are entrapped in his body now."

"But that would make me a shade also." Eragon realized with a start.

"That is dependent on how you define a shade. Look around you and tell me what you see." Eragon glanced around, noting the many robed figures, who silently stood between the trees. Their faces were hidden in the shadows cast by their hoods.

"Are they trapped in my body?" Eragon asked.

"No. When I enchanted you, I merely asked for their cooperation. Everyone you see here is present of their own volition. Wild spirits, like the ones that now live in Carsaib, are unbound souls. Free to do as they please separated from this world. However, when somebody dies, Eragon, their soul may choose to live on as a spirit, to wander this land for eternity, to observe, but never interfere. Those who choose to do so generally have strong ties to the land. They embody the purity of AlagaŹsia and are untouchable by vile magic like Carsaib's."

"But you can talk to them." Eragon stated, more as a fact than a question.

"Very few possess the ability, but indeed it is so, Eragon. When they realized what was at stake, twenty-seven of the Arucane, the endless spirits of the land, agreed to save you. I forged their souls to yours " a procedure that can only succeed if the host's heart is pure. Unlike Carsaib, or Durza as he is now known, you do not have access to their power. Not yet at least." Icarus moved to stand behind Eragon and brought his hands to rest upon the young boy's shoulders.

"Wherever your journey may take you, Eragon, they will always travel with you. One by one they will come to you, as they are needed and they will offer you their power. All you will have to do is reach out and take hold of it."

"Why do I have the feeling it sounds a lot easier than it is actually going to be?"

"Because you are right. The others feel that it is too early to shoulder you with such a burden, Eragon, but I know that deep within your heart you have already realized this yourself. You are the last free and capable rider on the face of AlagaŹsia. You have the potential to bathe this earth in flames and forge it into something better or destroy it in the process. We are not here to force your hand, for all your decisions must be your own. Just know this. All the spirits that reside within you have come knowing full well that when you unlock their power, your soul will devour theirs. They are all prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for you, to erase their very existence so that you may prolong yours. Do not squander their gift."

Eragon visibly swallowed in the face of such knowledge. "This is too much. How can I erase twenty seven being, who have no doubt all achieved greater things than I have in life?"

"Do not forget this was their choice, Eragon. You are not forcing their hand. If anything, they forced your hand. All they wish is to see you succeed so that their deeds will not be lost to the disease that now lives in this world." When Eragon was visibly starting to panic, Icarus placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "Take a

moment, Eragon. I know this is a lot to take in."

After fifteen minutes Eragon had calmed down sufficiently. "Alright," he said, righting himself once more. "I can see her," he said, gesturing to the woman who had stood unmoving in front of them all this time, "why do the rest of them hide their faces?"

"They do so because you have no need of them yet. As I said before, they will reveal themselves in due time. The woman in front of you is Alisadne, the huntress of old, who single-handedly hunted the three Creatures of Saxidus. She has decided that, seeing as you primarily wield a bow, her skills have now become of vital importance to your survival. Alisadne is of the opinion that her skills had better be learned now. That way you will not have to worry about unlocking them when the need for them becomes evident." Eragon stared at her, wondering what he was supposed to do next.

"If you choose to accept her offer, she will offer you a challenge and, should you prove successful, you will unlock her part of your soul." Icarus continued.

"And how exactly should I go about this?"

"Go to her and find out." Icarus replied, a devilish smile on his face. Slowly Eragon approached her, shooting unnerved glances at the still smirking Icarus. When he got within arm's reach the woman suddenly lashed out, wrapping her arms around him and pulling him forward. Eragon stumbled into her embrace as her lips found his. The last thing he remembered was the taste of her lips, a slight cherry taste, before his vision went white.

\* \* \*

><p>Once again I would like to thank all of you who reviewed, you are awesome. Now in the spirit of writer-reader interaction I have written a little something for all you wonderful people below. I will see you next chapter!<p>

Diabolo88000 - I am glad you enjoyed the first chapter. Hopefully the second one was satisfactory as well!

dasbiest - I'm not just going to reveal major plot points like that! This chapter may have answered some of your questions, though. I hope you enjoyed it.

Maezan - Well, I must admit you immediately picked up on one of my weaker points of storytelling. I am really bad at writing beginnings. Now you asked many questions, so for simplicity's sake I will put the answers in list-format.

1)You found out the answer in this chapter

2)No

3)You will find out in ten chapters or so

4)You will find out in ten chapters or so

5)You found out the answer in this chapter

I know, really unsatisfying answers ;), but hey, if I just unveiled the plot of this story, you would stop reading it and I like readers (especially those who review!) I am glad that you approve of the story overall though.

Dragon Junkie74 - I love you

orca3553 - I guess you found out in this chapter more or less what has become of Eragon... "Hold fast, answers are coming soon."  
~Icarus. (Thank you for reviewing, though!)

Guest - I don't know who you are, but I will find you and I will hug you. As for finishing the whole cycle, I'm gonna try man!

\* \* \*

><p>As always, thank you for reading and don't hesitate to pop in a review, follow, PM, whatever. I will take a moment of my time to thank you for it. See you guys in a few days!<p>

### 3. Chapter 3

Hello guys, I have come to you with another chapter in my mediocre installment! (personally I am not quite satisfied with it, but after two days of rewriting and re-evaluating I do not know what else to do anymore). Enjoy!

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>My name is Alisadne of Nathran, hunter of the west and wielder of Rahna's Bow. This, Eragon, son of no one, is your task: hunt as I have before. Prove the purity of your soul and what was once mine shall be yours."<em>

Eragon woke up feeling blades of grass under his fingertips. He righted himself and opened his eyes, taking in his surroundings. The sun was setting over the horizon. In the distance he saw a small cabin and instinctively he knew he had to go towards it. As he walked, a fine mist appeared next to him. It seemed random at first, but after several paces Alisadne's lush form appeared out of the silvery strands.

"Welcome to my nightmare." She softly whispered, barely loud enough for Eragon to understand her. "Every time I close my eyes, this is where I find myself. To succeed, you must resolve my memory." She silently walked next to him, her bow in hand. From her quiver she took three arrows and along with the bow, extended them to Eragon.

From the silvery mist they seemed to solidify into actual, solid wood. "Take them, for you will need them." With great care Eragon took the weapons from her. "Good luck, Eragon. Call me when I am needed." Eragon was about to question the cryptic nature of her remark, but the mist thinned until she was no longer there.

With the sun setting he knew he would have to make camp. The cabin, although empty and abandoned, seemed inviting enough for such a purpose. He approached and found the door slightly ajar. As he expected, nobody was within.

Eragon looked around the inside of the cabin and found the walls adorned by several portraits all in incredible detail. Without exception they appeared to be staring down at him, features twisted in a grotesque display of hatred and malice. Outside, the sun had set. It was too late to leave now. Realizing he was as good as trapped, Eragon tore some floorboards out and barricaded the door as best he could. Then he settled against the wall opposite the door, bow in his lap and after hours of restless tossing finally fell into a restless sleep.

He did not know for how long he had slept, but a loud noise above him quickly roused him from his slumber. It was still dark outside. There were light, yet sharp tapping noises all around him, as if a thousand tiny hammers were gently tapping the roofing. Then something heavy hit the door. The makeshift barricade he had erected groaned under the strain. Without hesitation Eragon stood, prepared an arrow and drew the bowstring back, ready to strike at whatever burst through that door.

Then, as soon as the noises had appeared, they were gone. He didn't sleep for the remainder of that night, ever wary for the return of whatever had come around last night. When the sun finally did rise he noticed somethingâ€| eerieâ€|

Where the portraits had been earlier, there were now only windows. The trees outside swayed in the wind as if nothing noteworthy had happened. Had he merely imagined last night? He couldn't have. Ever careful he removed the blockade and opened the door, opening it slightly. The fields outside were deserted. Not even a bird could be heard, which was somewhat worrying.

Fully opening the door he walked out, bow at the ready. The outside of the hut was covered in dents and scratches and smack in the middle of the door a patch of splintered wood. If he didn't know better he would say something tried to gnaw its way in. Upon closer inspection, he noticed the pinprick-like trail that disappeared into the woods behind the cabin.

Whatever this creature was, it moved fast, was large and heavy. Swift on his feet he followed the trail into the dark forest, for he knew that it was expected of him. At first the forest seemed fairly ordinary, save for the utter lack of wildlife. After several hours he found the first evidence of life. Or rather, what had once been life.

A ribcage, devoid of any flesh, poked out from between the dead leaves. The remainder of the bones where nowhere to be seen. He did not know what predator had gotten hold of the unfortunate victim, but it had possessed great strength to maul the body to such a degree. Carefully he pressed onwards, knowing full well that whatever lurked in these woods could and would kill.

And so he mapped out the woods, day after restless night. Every night the creatures would come pounding on his door, every morning there would be fresh prints leading into the woods. He found many more kills, most decayed to naught but bone, yet some more fresh. One day he found a victim, a young boy, with many holes drilled through its body, as if he had been riddled with arrows.



The blood had long since dried into a dark brown solid that caked his body from head to toe. His corpse was mangled to extreme lengths. Arms and legs were gone, eyes gouged out. It was that night he heard the first evidence, other than the tapping and banging noises, of the monster that lurked here. This time, after it had once again failed to break down the door, it released an otherworldly, bone chilling screech.

And it was answered.

Not once, but twice. The words of Icarus echoed in his mind

"\_Alisadne, the huntress of old, who single-handedly hunted the three Creatures of Saxidus."\_

Was that the dream he was reliving? How could he, a mere farmer who happened to use a bow every now and then hope to defeat the dangers of legend? Eragon knew he stood no chance of success.

The next day he noticed something unusual " that is, more unusual than the usual unusual. He knelt down next to the myriad of tracks that by now littered the short ways between his cabin and the woods. If Eragon had looked in a mirror, he would have seen the maroon haze that briefly passed through his eyes.

Something was off about the freshest tracks. The right imprints were deeper, as if the creature had been carrying something heavy. Had it scored a fresh kill elsewhere? Eragon got down on his knees, closely examining the trampled dirt. Sure enough there were traces of an ochre brown mixed with the black earth. Fresh blood.

Yes, he could clearly see it now. It led into the woods, even where the thick pack of dead leaves had prevented his track otherwise. He felt a small sense of victory. \_He could find the monsters now!\_ If they were raiding his camp by night, surely they must be sleeping by day. This was his chance!

It was a long and arduous task tracking the creatures deep down into the woods. The trail led him towards the distant mountain range where finally, tucked between two sheer rock faces, he found the entrance to a dark, evil-looking cave.

Had he been in control of his own body, he would have backed off. Yet Alisadne's memory seemed to take over and his feet slowly carried him into that dark hole. He felt something cold and hard clasp around his leg, causing him to lose his footing. To his great dismay, he was torn into the dark depths, his back scraping over the uneven, rocky ground. It was by sheer instinct he managed to hold on to his bow and three arrows.

After what seemed like ages the creature threw him into the air, tossing him further into the darkness. No light permeated this far down and deep down Eragon knew this was the end for him. There would be no fight, just him and an invisible foe who would tear him to shreds like the many corpses he had seen over the preceding days. Something hard and unforgiving collided with his face and pain was the last thing he knew before his world went dark.

"\_Time to learn."\_

It was Alisadne's voice to the left of him that pulled him from the darkness into a world so white it was nearly blinding. "You hold your bow like a frail old man." Eragon turned to face her. She stood in her regal pose, arms folded. After a few moments of silence she walked towards him. "Draw your bow." Eragon did as she asked, pulling the bow to full drawn and holding it.

"Look at your bow hand." She said, gesturing at his left hand. "You have it twisted; the whole weight of the bow rests on your thumb now. I knew you were self-taught, but I didn't think you were stupid." Eragon corrected his mistake and drew the bow again.

This time Alisadne lashed out without warning, giving his bow arm a rough punch. His elbow collapsed outwards under the draw weight of the bow, causing him to drop it. "Ouch." Eragon complained, rubbing his sore arm.

"Learning is a painful experience. Pick up your bow." When he reached down to grab it Alisadne none too gently stomped her boot down on his hand, pinning him down. "Never drop your arms in combat. You are not hunting a fawn, Eragon. You are protected in this dream, but out there you will die. Now you will pick up your bow and no matter what happens, you will not let go of it. Understood?"

She took the ensuing silence as confirmation and removed her heavy foot. When he struggled back to his feet Alisadne immediately sent him back down by sweeping his feet away from under his body. With a heavy thud he hit the floor. "At least you held on to your bow this time." She murmured.

"How exactly is this going to help me?" Eragon asked, almost out of breath.

Alisadne stared down at him, before sighing and lowering herself down next to him. "One cannot hope to walk without first having learned to crawl. Literally in your case." She remarked, glancing at his still downed form. "Do you know why I brought you here?" She asked. Eragon shook his head. "You were about to fail my trial." She stated, not being subtle about it.

"Oh."

"Yeah. You were doing so well. You learned how to track and how to scout the lay of the land. So tell me, what is it that has you struggling against your foe."

"It's pitch black in there, I cannot shoot what I cannot see."

"What, in essence, is the art of archery, Eragon?"

"To hit your target with an arrow."

"Precisely. How do you find your target?"

"Like I said before, I need to see them." Alisadne shook her head, smiling at his apparent ignorance.

"When you walk in the woods and a twig snaps behind you, do you need

to turn around and look to see your target?"

"No."

"When you are sitting at home and you feel the breeze in your neck, do you need to face the door to know someone has entered?"

"No." Eragon said, slowly beginning to get the gist of what she was trying to teach him.

"When it's spring and the farmers fertilize their lands, do you need to see the field to know where it is?"

"No, I can smell it in the air." She swung herself over him, so she was straddling his smaller form. Normally such a position would be called arousing to say the least, but her wicked smile and murderous look took any eroticism out of the moment.

"Very good, Eragon. So \_fight.\_" And with that she was gone and he was back in the darkness of the cave. He closed his eyes, feeling the ground vibrate as the creatures moved around. One was to his left and the other two were above him? Quickly he rolled to the side, feeling the wind pass by his cheek as something very sharp barely missed him.

He saw the barely visible presence of Alisadne in the darkness as it moved towards him. He felt a slight chill pass up his spine as she forced herself into his body. \_"Move with me, Eragon."\_ Putting one of the arrows into the bow, his feet moved of their own accord as he rolled sideways. The clicking noises reverberated around the cave as the creatures seemed to communicate.

Alisadne guided his hands as he shot two arrows in rapid succession, nailing two of the creatures. They screeched in pain and Eragon felt the winds stir as they thrashed around. The two caused sufficient distraction that he almost missed the third, who charged at him. Just too late he dodged to the side, receiving a painful nick on his shoulder in return. Turning around he nocked the last arrow and fired it after his assailant.

Eragon waited in silent prayer, hoping to hear the squelching sound that told him he hit. Just when he thought he missed, a third pained screech joined the first two. \_"Congratulations."\_

Alisadne moved from him, moving to stand next to him. \_"See what you defeated."\_ She said, raising a hand above her head. She summoned a bright light, bathing the cave in luminescence. Eragon nearly vomited as he saw the malformed monstrosities he had slain. If he had to describe them he would say they resembled millipedes. Except they had thick armor, pointed, venomous fangs and were the size of a small house each. \_"Sometimes the eyes are what keep us from achieving our greatest deeds."\_

The world around them slowly started to disintegrate until only Eragon and Alisadne remained. "I am afraid this is where we part ways, Eragon. Your soul is assimilating mine as we speak." She said, gesturing to the world tearing apart around them.

"Iâ€¦ thank you." Eragon said. Alisadne waved his words away.

"Please just listen, we don't have much time remaining. After all this, you probably still wonder why I kissed you when we first met and I will tell you why. The world is a harsh place, Eragon. Be it men or women, everyone is drawn to power, grace and wealth. I became the legend of my time and as such I never got the chance to give my heart to someone worthy. You must make sure it is not so for you as well. Nobody deserves to live out their days in loneliness. I wished to have shared at the very least my first kiss before I depart from this world." She smiled at him as her physical form started to lose coherence. "May your arrows always fly true and may your name prosper into eternity. I know you are destined for greatness."

"Wait." But he was back in the forest, surrounded by the robed figures and Icarus.

"Welcome back." Icarus said.

"Have you been waiting for me all this time?" Eragon asked, somewhat perplexed.

"We have waited the entirety of one count for you, yes. Remember, Eragon. In here there is no time." He didn't know why, but the words made him feel hollow, like the last six days he lived held little to no meaning. As if Allisadne's sacrifice was nothing to be remembered or honored.

"I see we have pressed you hard. In that case, this is where we will leave you, Eragon. Go now, use your new-found skills and rest. The world will still be here tomorrow." Icarus said, putting a reassuring hand on his shoulder before lifting his spell and disappearing along with the robed figures.

His bow felt strange in his hands. He had grown used to the engraved, skillfully crafted bow and straight arrows Allisadne had gifted to him. Eragon realized that the only way to truly commemorate his teacher was to put her lessons to use. As such he stood motionless, taking in his surroundings to their fullest.

Mimicking Allisadne's movements, he fired three arrows into a tree to his left in rapid succession, pleased when three large birds dropped down with arrows embedded in their bodies. Quietly he collected his kills, put the arrows back in his quiver and made his way back to camp.

Silently he dropped the three dead animals at Brom's feet. "Back so soon?" He asked, a little surprised.

"Just because I was the only hunter in Carvahall, doesn't mean I was a bad hunter." Eragon replied, picking up one of the birds and stripping it of feathers. They ate their meal in silence before settling into their bedrolls. Hopefully tomorrow would be less eventful.

\* \* \*

><p>Hello guys, just as a quick AN, I want to stress that despite Eragon's new found power, he will not become a broken, god-like character. Drawbacks to his current... condition... will reveal themselves shortly, I promise!<p>

\* \* \*

><p>And as usual a little appreciation for my reviewers!<p>

orca3553 - yup, she really does!

dasbiest - I am glad chapter two was also to your liking. I am not so happy with this one, but we will see what people think.

xXxGhostRiderxXx - Trust me when I tell you Eragon will be powerfull in his own right, but not overpowered. In a few chapters you along with all the other readers will discover what a debilitating effect Icarus's magic has actually had on Eragon. A protagonist without a challenge makes for a really dull story.

Maezan - You are, of course, correct. I guess that is what I deserve for writing without a proof reader! The offending mistake has been resolved, hopefully making it clearer for future readers what the hell is happening. I am glad you approve of the way I am unfolding this story, hopefully many more satisfactory chapters will follow.

TheRiderWriter - Although Eragon will be recieving some degree of power from the spirits (otherwise there would not really be a plot-point to having them), I do not plan on making a god-like Eragon who straight up lvl-me-scrub's that Galbatorix-bitch to show who is his daddy. In that regard I fear you will find this chapter to not be to your liking very much, but I promise that very few spirits in the future will offer power-spikes like Allisadne did. Furthermore I would like to stress the same point i made to xXxGhostRiderxXx, that to compensate for Eragon's new-found power, he will be fighting a number of serious handicaps yet-to-be-revealed. Cheers!

Jay - I am happy to have found another interested reader in you! It is really great to have people like you come in and review, it helps me to keep going. As for my opinion on ExA, I will fucking bury you in it. Paolini did way too little with them in my opinion and it's a mistake I intend to rectify tenfold.

D4ni3l - Damn, Daniel, back at it again with the white vans! (Sorry couldn't resist!) I hope you liked this chapter as much, if not more, than the last one.

Mad Hatter - All I'm gonna say is that you are thinking along the right lines. All might seem like sunshine and roses right now, but I promise that will change very soon. Eragon is about to discover some drawbacks to his new power.

\* \* \*

><p>Alright, that will be all for today folks! Don't forget to leave a review if you made it this far and are not yet disgusted by my very presence! Cheers.<p>

#### 4. Chapter 4

Hello everyone!

First off, yes, I know this chapter is 1) later than promised 2) shorter than usual. Turns out that endurance writing is still a little hard on my right pinky. Furthermore, I was clumsy enough to now slice off two fingertips of my LEFT hand, so eventually I just kinda gave up and pushed through the pain. For you. Yes. You. So please do enjoy this chapter, It's a bit of a filler for the action to come next chapter. As usual, all the reviewers will find a little something at the bottom. Enjoy!

\* \* \*

><p>Eragon twisted and turned in his bedroll for hours, unable to find the peace of sleep. Eventually he just gave up and got up. Careful not to disturb Brom and the dragon that had nestled between their two bedrolls he moved some distance away from their camp site. He found a large stone, nestled between the trees and positioned in such a way it gave a breathtaking view of the moonlit forest ahead.<p>

Far behind him he knew the villagers of Carvahall slept quietly. Strangely enough he found his thoughts wandering to his cousin, Roran. Eragon wondered what had become of him, never having heard from him since he cut ties with his birth home over six years ago. A slight smile played over Eragon's face. Roran was never going to believe what had happened to him in such a short span of time. Then again, for all he knew, stranger things yet might have happened to his cousin. Even though Roran had more or less abandoned him, Eragon never could find it within his heart to truly hate or blame Roran for the things he had done.

He heard the slight rustle of leaves behind him, knew Brom was standing there before he even spoke. He had Alisadne to thank for that, probably. "Can't sleep?" The old story teller asked. Eragon shook his head in reply.

"A side effect ever since what... happened... to me." He clarified. "Sleep rarely finds me now."

"What has been the matter with you today. I send you into the woods to hunt a few rabbits and since your return you have seemed a little... off."

"Do you think we can ever truly die? Be erased from this world without a trace?"

Brom was silent. "No, I choose to believe that we will be reunited with those lost to us." He eventually said. For a moment there was something heavy in Brom's words. A forgotten memory so terrible, yet so wonderful, but Eragon chose not to press. "But enough of such ponderings. If you are not going to rest we may as well make good use of our time. Seeing as you are destined to be a dragon rider, I think it is only proper we teach you how to wield a blade."

"You know how to use a sword?" Eragon said hesitantly, eyeing Brom's withered form.

"Come down from that rock and find out."

With a huff Eragon got up and nimbly climbed down from his vantage

point. Brom reached down and picked up two sticks from the ground. He swung each experimentally to make sure it was strong enough and held one out to him. Eragon took it, taking a few strides back.

The moonlight bathed them in a gentle white glow, just enough to see. "So how do we do this?" Eragon asked. "Do we just count down and-" Between one breath and the next Brom had him disarmed and rubbing his wrists where he had hit them hard with his stick.

"Terrible. Pick that up again." He said, motioning to the stick. Half heartedly Eragon wondered if Brom was going to trample his hands like Alisadne had done when he'd dropped her bow. Fortune smiled upon him however as Brom merely stood by silently, waiting for him to get ready. Eragon was quickly beginning to reconsider his views of the old man. Perhaps Brom did have a few spare tricks and secrets up his sleeve.

"Clearly you are better at this than I am." He said. "At least allow me a little advantage." Eragon pleaded. He swore there was a twinkle of amusement in Brom's eyes.

"You would seek to further disadvantage a frail, old man? Very well, what did you have in mind?" He asked, clearly having chosen to humour Eragon.

Azure and blue eyes darted around, looking for something, anything to give him an advantage. His eyes fell on another stick. He went to pick it up and resumed his stance in front of Brom.

"I think you will quickly come to reconsider that decision." Brom said, smiling outright by now. He did nothing short of proving himself right, literally bashing Eragon into submission over and over. Each time he gave a few small pointers, yet Eragon knew he was only progressing at a snail's pace. After hours Brom finally wished him goodnight and returned back to the campsite.

Although physically exhausted, Eragon still did not feel tired. Not really knowing what else to do he resumed his former watch on the rock. He sat until the moon had almost passed overhead. Then he felt something warm press against his arm. Eragon glanced sideways to see his dragon, by now the size of a small dog, attempting to struggle its way into his lap.

It was truly amazing how fast the dragon seemed to grow. It was as if with every passing day it grew at least one hand in length. The blue scales lit up brightly in the moonlight, refracting the light in beautiful iridescent patterns. "Questionable choice, Eragon." From the corner of his eye he saw Icarus's characteristic form, the shadows lurking around him like a fine mist.

"What are you talking about?"

"To wield two swords in battle, it is suicide. If you find yourself in the heat of combat and you are surrounded, how will you defend yourself? Surely you do not hope to rely on killing them before they kill you."

"Swords are light. It would be possible to evade their blows."

Icarus glanced at him, a frown on his face. "Because you have never actually held a real sword before I will forgive that transgression. That kindling may be light," he said, gesturing to the discarded and dented sticks, "but a real sword of metal and steel is almost as heavy as a shield. Even the elves with their superhuman strength do not chance the danger. You are too overburdened to fight with the nimbleness of a single blade and you lack the protection of a shield."

"Surely it must be possible, are you forbidding me from training with two swords?" Eragon asked.

"Oh no, not at all. I'm just trying to tell you that it's a bad choice." Icarus was silent for a moment, staring quietly ahead of him. "Let me tell you a story, Eragon. Even in my time, when the world was filled with legends and mythical creatures, there was war and I have seen my fair share of battlefields. I knew a young warrior, much like you. Granted, he had trained under me for many more years than you can hope to imagine, but I think you two would have like each other. He once told me the same thing, that it would be possible to fight as you desire to do now." Icarus's face darkened.

"He fared decently well in his endeavours, until we came face to face with the evil that ruled in our time."

"What happened?"

"He was disarmed in seconds and had his throat ripped out; bled out before I was able to save him." Icarus replied nonchalantly. "Do you know why he died, Eragon?" It was a rhetorical question, but Eragon shook his head in good form. "He misplaced his right sword a fraction to the left in his opening stance. That was all it took." Eragon glanced his way with a disbelieving look.

"If you want to fight and live with two blades in hand, your form must be flawless. It will matter fairly little against most opponents you meet â€" they simply treat their swords as fancy clubs. But if you continue down this path I fear what will happen when you face someone stronger than you. More skilled than you." Icarus's words were unspoken, but just as clear. What would happen when he faced the likes of Durza? "Just think about it, Eragon."

"Just think about it." He said, before disappearing into thin air, leaving Eragon alone with his dragon and his thoughts. The two sat together in companionable silence until Brom came to fetch them for breakfast.

Later in the afternoon they came across Therinsford. Although larger than Carvahall, it was still not more than a farming community. Taking Brom's advice to heart he kept his cloak pulled tightly around him and his face hidden. They did not want to rouse suspicion by flashing Eragon's unusual eyes. Brom entrusted several coins to Eragon and told him to find some food. When Eragon asked what Brom was going to do in the meantime, all he received was a vague answer.

Silently swearing about being kept in the dark he set out for the market. Not bothering with bargaining too much he bought some cured meats and fruits â€" they would last much longer than perishable



wares. When he returned to Brom, he found that the story teller had managed to find them honest to god horses. "One day you must tell me all your secrets Brom." He murmured, dropping the food in a pile on the ground.

"One day, perhaps, but not right now. Let's get saddled. We can reach Yazuac by tomorrow night if we are lucky. From there on out it should be much easier to travel south." Of course as their luck would have it it rained that night. Perhaps 'storm' might have been a better description. Everything was soaked. The horses were soaked, their riders were soaked, the food was soaked and what was worse, any potential firewood was also soaked.

The story teller had just disposed of the now spoiled food before making his way over to Eragon. "Go take care of the horses, I will build us a fire." Brom instructed, after Eragon failed for the fifth time to light the damp kindling. With difficulty Eragon unwrapped his numb fingers from the flint, wincing in pain as he did. As Brom hunched over the fire he thought he heard him murmur something along the lines of 'brisingr'. It came out like a swearword and perhaps it was in some long forgotten language.

Eragon, however, was too worn out to complain about the fire that crackled to life soon after. Without much ceremony he unstrapped the saddles and tied the horses to a tree with plenty of leeway so they could move virtually freely. When he returned to the fire Brom was waiting there once more, sticks in hand. "Gather yourself Eragon. We are not done yet for today." He said, throwing him one. Eragon reached down and gathered a second, preparing himself.

Icarus could go stick it. If this is how he wanted to fight, this would be the way. His way. His new found resolve did not last very long under Brom's punishing regime of kicks and blows. This time, when Brom finally saw it fit to release him, sleep did find him.

He was back on that open field. The green pastures ahead of him flowed into dense forest. Nestled in the treeline was that wooden cottage he had come to love and hate during his time with Alisadne. The familiar weight of her bow rested in his right hand and a single arrow in his left. He moved forwards, making way for the cottage.

"Hello Eragon, come to see what you destroyed?" He whirled around to face the female voice. Alisadne stood there in all her naked glory. Considering her modesty Eragon averted his gaze. "Pathetic. Can't even look at a woman without blushing." He felt a dizzying darkness come over him. He closed his eyes, trying to shield himself from the swirling abyss his dream created.

When Eragon opened his eyes again he was no longer in the field, but in that dark cave where Alisadne's quest had eventually led him. Something roared out in the darkness. Instinctively he shot the arrow, hearing the weapon strike home with a squelching noise. The roaring receded to a whimpering plea as a puddle of blood started to form around his feet.

Following the trail through the darkness he saw not the monsters from Alisadne's vision, but his very own dragon, arrow embedded in its chest. It stared at him with a look of betrayal. "Are you proud of what you have done Eragon?"

"\_Are you proud of what you are?"\_

With a start Eragon sat up in his bedroll, trying to steady his rapid breathing. Groaning he fell back down in his bedroll. It had merely been a nightmare. The remnants of their fire smouldered next to him, bathing their campsite in a gentle glow. It starkly contrasted with the darkness from which he had just emerged. Above him, the moon floated ever so gently through the everlasting darkness of the night sky. He felt something heavy settle on top of him. It was his dragon, as if having sensed his distress.

Gently he reached out to it and lazily scratched the underside of its throat. He knew he was doing something right when he heard the faint humming that emerged from the blue creature and made a mental note to remember that particular spot. He knew sleep would not find him again tonight.

\* \* \*

><p>Cat Beats - No worries. As I have stressed beforehand, no OP demi-god Eragon for you, kind sir. As for Icarus, you will find out who and what he is. Not grey folk, though. Also not somebody who is going to run around the battlefield winning everything for Eragon with his super-sayan powers. I am glad that besides the worrying you approve of the story in general. Hopefully you will keep finding it to your satisfaction.<p>

MadHatter - It will get even more complicated than that, my friend! The time and trial Eragon will have to face each time a spirit decides to offer himself will be a little arbitrary (and dependent on what they have to teach). I am literally making this shit up as I go, so hang in there with me. As always I do appreciate the continued reviewing and godspeed!

Rasmusemees - If you have not found one, I would suggest going for Reversed Life by Rainxoxo. Although not exactly god-like, Eragon is POWERFUL in that fiction. And stays that way throughout I might add. Then again, Eragon would not have to be god-like just to be unstoppable, now would he ;).

Zeus795 - Don't worry bro, as soon as it heals I will hurt some other body part.

Kyll11 - I am happy to hear you have been enjoying my work. As I mentioned at the very beginning, finger-health is not quite where it should be, but I will continue to make chapters out of my tears for you!

Maezan - So do I man, So do I. Thank you for the continued support, though!

Vizual-Era - Your words are too flattering. I merely channel the brilliance of those around me into words. Personally I find that having a character be powerful for no reason (and thus having no catharsis to strive for) makes for really dull story telling. Not to mention it becomes really hard to write. Stories like these kind of generate their own content in my head, allowing me to update somewhat frequently (presuming my hands work that is). I am not quite certain what I will do yet for the ExA, although it will be around in large

quantities. Maybe you can help me out. All you have to do is answer this one question: is Faolin alive?

Brobe Kyant - I appreciate the words of kindness! To be honest it was an idea I have been playing around with for YEARS. Then, somewhere, I just decided to start writing and see what came of it. Things have been going great so far, thanks to all you wonderful reviewers! As for your second question, Roran will definitely be making an appearance. I am not creating this veil of mystery around his whereabouts to deny my readers afterwards!

\* \* \*

><p>That will be all for tonight. Next update will most likely be Wednesday night, so be on the lookout for that. Peace!<p>

End  
file.